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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [ELAB](#) [KJUS](#) [CH](#)
SUBJECT: DRL OFFICER CHANG EAST CHINA VISIT

1. (SBU) Summary. During his May 21-24 visit to Shanghai and Hefei, Anhui Province, DRL Program Officer met with DRL grantee organizations International Bridges for Justice (IBJ) and SE Consortium for International Development/Global Suppliers Institute (SECID/GSI), as well as academics and students at Fudan University Journalism School and the Shanghai Municipal People's Congress (SMPC) Legislative Affairs Office. While IBJ appeared to be thriving in Anhui and having some impact on legal aid in the area, SECID/GSI had just begun its training programs and had not yet assessed the effect of the program on labor practices of local suppliers. Fudan University Journalism School and SMPC were generally pleased with their cooperation with the U.S.-China Educational Trust (USCET) but wanted more depth of content in their activities. SMPC provided a briefing on its efforts to increase transparency through public hearings and said it was eager for more exchanges with U.S. counterparts. End Summary.

IBJ Legal Aid Project

2. (SBU) Chang and Consulate FSN Rule of Law Coordinator (ROLC) visited IBJ offices in Hefei, Anhui province on May 21 and met with four local lawyers trained by IBJ. IBJ provides training and mentoring to a core team of private and governmental legal aid lawyers in Anhui Province, who then pass on this training to colleagues. The lawyers at the meeting praised IBJ's project and said that the training they received had helped them to improve their criminal defense skills. They added that this training was having an impact in Anhui as more and more legal aid lawyers received training.

3. (SBU) Cheng and ROLC also visited the Hefei Municipal Legal Aid Center and received a briefing from the Center's Director and Hefei Bar Association Criminal Defense Chairman Liu Tao. Liu said that the Legal Aid Center's cooperation with IBJ had been very helpful and the center had opened an office at the local detention center to provide free legal advice to people detained at the center. He added that his office not only provided legal aid for people in Hefei, but also provided legal services to migrant workers from Hefei who were working outside the city. For example, he assisted a migrant who stood trial in Hangzhou. Liu added that the center has had to limit the number of migrant worker cases it could accept since such cases were very costly. He said the center's biggest challenge was finding financial support for its operations.

14. (SBU) On May 22, State DRL Program Officer Samuel Chang, Consulate's Poloff and FSN Political Assistant visited South-East Consortium for International Development's (SECID) Global Supplier Institute (GSI) China Project office in Shanghai. GSI Senior Project Manager Stella Wang briefed participants on the project. She said the purpose of the project was to provide training to companies operating in China, particularly those supplying products to multinational companies (MNCs), on how to improve their business and labor practices. GSI contracted Suzhou-based educational investment consulting company BOLD to provide the training. GSI had contracts with three companies in Changzhou, Suzhou, and Wuxi.

15. (SBU) Before the training began, GSI had performed on-site assessments to determine the companies' training needs. Both sides then worked together to design "tailor-made" training. For example, GSI ran three programs at a Changzhou-based garden tool company including visual management, quality control and production standardization to improve workplace safety. For the Suzhou digital technology company, the program focused on how to improve workplace ergonomics and reduce overtime. After the training program was decided, GSI agreed to deliver a package of services to the companies, including three on-site assessments, a six-day customize training program, and, at least six progress reviews. The training cycle lasted six months. Wang said that all three projects were still in the initial stages and there were no assessments yet on the projects effectiveness.

16. (SBU) GSI team assigned to a company consisted of a trainer and at least two interns. The interns were recruited from local graduate schools and all had an undergraduate background in

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engineering. The interns worked with the trainers to collect data and monitor how well the companies implemented concepts or practices they learned from the training. The intern program lasted 12 weeks and interns spent two days a week on the project, providing project updates every two weeks. Wang was very proud of the internship program and said it provided many interns with hands-on management experience. She hoped that these interns would take the skills they learned during the internship and apply them at their future jobs as factory managers.

17. (SBU) According to Wang, GSI had developed a productive relationship with local governments and the American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham) in Shanghai. Wang said Suzhou Industry Park Administrative Committee encouraged companies to attend GSI training because it believed the training would increase productivity. AmCham's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Government Relations Manager Oliver Ye Yang added that Amcham companies were interested in the project since it could help suppliers meet labor standards. He noted, however, that Amcham companies were still waiting to see the results of the assessments before signing on. Yang was also concerned that the project appeared to be limited in scope. Currently, the project focused on high-tech or equipment manufacturing companies. Yang said it was unlikely that the more labor-intensive industries such as the textile sector would be interested in such a program as there was intense pressure on these types of companies to skirt labor laws to produce cheap goods at low prices. Although the training would increase productivity, most companies in the textile sector were focused on cost issues. He noted that local governments were more interested in auditing or inspections, GDP growth and tax revenue. As long as companies passed governmental audits, labor violations could be tolerated. Wang and BOLD Training Director CK Tan admitted that GSI's approach to addressing labor violations was indirect but maintained that it would ultimately improve workplace conditions.

18. (SBU) SMPC Legislative Affairs Commission provided a briefing on its cooperation with USCET and its efforts to increase public participation. SMPC Legislative Affairs Commission Vice Secretary General Zheng Hui generally praised USCET and Ambassador Julia Bloch. He said that in cooperation with USCET, Fudan University Professor Sun Zhe and Peking University Professor Cai Dingjian, SMPC held an international conference last year on Mine Safety Legislation at Fudan University. Conference participants included representatives from 16 provincial people's congresses, the National People's Congress, the State Council and U.S. mine safety experts. Zheng said the conference was successful and useful. The SMPC even broadcasted a mock trial of a case using U.S. mine safety legislation on its website, which received lots of good comments. Representatives appreciated the conference and the Chongqing People's Congress held a similar conference on Consumer Rights Protection this April. SMPC was currently discussing with USCET the possibility of holding an international conference on energy saving and environmental protection in 2008. Zheng said that the purpose of the exchanges was not to transplant American experiences or systems into China. U.S. and Chinese cultures were quite different and two countries' democratic processes were also different. However, it was important to broaden legislators' knowledge about the experiences and practices of other countries. Despite the positive aspects of cooperation with USCET, Zheng noted that USCET's programs were somewhat "ABC-ish" in nature and needed to be deeper in content rather than reintroducing basics.

19. (SBU) Noting Shanghai's Open Government Information Act, Zheng said open information was a crucial basis of the rule of law and transparent government. Governments should be open, otherwise they would become "tyrant" governments. He added that Premier Wen Jiabao also stressed the importance of open government information. The SMPC held public hearings on draft legislation five times this year. These drafts dealt with the protection of historical buildings, greening the city, labor contracts, and school safety. SMPC held four additional hearings, which he called "supervisory" hearings, to solicit views from the community on the work of local government agencies. Zheng said that the latest supervisory hearing was

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about employment promotion?. According to Zheng, citizens had to register and be selected by the SMPC to attend these hearings. The government often took out ads in local newspapers or posted information on the hearings on its websites. Local citizens could then register for the hearings and SMPC would hold a lottery to select participants. Zheng noted that only 10-15 citizens were allowed to attend each hearing.

110. (SBU) According to Zheng, Shanghai was able to implement a large number of experimental projects for three reasons. First, China's new administrative punishment law provided the legal basis for public hearings. Secondly, many people in the Legislative Affairs Commission were legal experts and professors and they brought many advanced ideas to the commission. Third, Shanghai's Municipal Government had the courage and willingness to make changes and carry out experimental projects. Both Zheng and SMPC Foreign Affairs Office Director Xiang Yang expressed their strong interest in having more cooperation and exchanges. Xiang hoped that there would be more cooperation between U.S. legislative bodies and the SMPC. SMPC was particularly interested in having exchanges on how to strengthen Congressional bodies' control of governmental budgets. Xiang added that SMPC employees already had basic knowledge of U.S. laws and regulations and what was really needed was more detailed and technical information about U.S. legal practices.

Fudan University Journalism School

111. (SBU) Fudan University Journalism School Dean Yu Zhenwei and Program Assistant Li Na were effusive about the school's relationship with USCET. Two journalism students who

participated in the USCET programs also attended the meeting. According to Li, Fudan had two programs with USCET, Journalist In Residence (JIR) and Financial Media Institute (FMI). Under the JIR program, USCET paid for a high-level U.S. journalist to lecture at Chinese universities, including Fudan University. Former JIR Journalists included David Broder and William Raspberry. Li and the journalism students were pleased with the JIR program and the access it provided students with to meet high-level U.S. journalists. They had no preferences on the type of journalist they wanted to participate in the program and could not provide any concrete recommendations for what type of information they needed about journalism in the United States. All they wanted was a well-known journalist that could attract a large crowd. The FMI program focused on financial reporting. One student said that the FMI taught him more about professionalism and helped him to appreciate the differences between American and Chinese journalism but was limited in its impact because it lasted only ten days.

¶12. (SBU) Another journalism student noted that the most surprising thing he learned from the programs was that there was also censorship or at least self-censorship in the United States because many journalists chose not to write about certain issues during the Iraq war. She also said she learned that journalists should think creatively and write about issues in which they were personally interested. She noted that it was difficult for students in China to think creatively because they were used to just accepting information from superiors, such as the government and their parents. Dean Yu, Li and the students all played down the role of the Internet on the media and said that they did not believe much of the information on the Internet. They agreed that Chinese journalists should be better paid to avoid the common practice of taking hongbao, or cash-filled envelopes, for favorable press coverage.

¶13. (U) DRL/P Chang cleared this message.
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